

June 3, 2003

I. CALL TO ORDER

Finance Chairperson, Katrina Murray, called a Finance and Facilities Committee of the Whole Meeting of the School Committee to order in the auditorium at the East Somerville Community School, at 6:35 p.m., to discuss the FY04 budget.

II. ROLL CALL

Present were Ms. Cardoso, Ms. Harris, Ms. Bauer, Mr. Sullivan, Ms. Taylor, Mr. Murray, and Ms. Rossetti.

Mayor Gay and Alderman O'Donovan were absent.

Dr. Albert F. Argenziano, Superintendent of Schools, and Ms. Marie B. Ferrari, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Administration were also present, along with approximately twenty three members of the audience.

III. FY04 Budget Discussion

Ms. Murray opened this evening's meeting and informed the audience that last night, June 2nd, the committee met in a Finance and Facilities Committee of the Whole meeting and discussed the salaries part of the school department budget where Mr. Anthony Caliri, Human Resources Manager and Mr. Joseph Tringale, Assistant Comptroller gave a staffing reduction analysis overview. This evening's discussion will be on the operations part of the school department budget. Ms. Murray then turned the meeting over to the Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Argenziano.

Per a request made last evening at the Finance and Facilities Committee meeting, Dr. Argenziano reviewed the breakdown list of the Somerville High School teacher reductions, (2002-03 to 2003-04 school year), a reduction of twenty five teachers.

Ms. Marie Ferrari gave an overview of the Somerville Public Schools FY2003 and 04 Comparison Operations Budget. Handouts were provided to members of the school committee and the audience in order to follow along during the presentation. Ms. Ferrari explained the difference between the \$8.8 million FY04 budget comparing it to the FY03 budget, which is a \$10.6 million budget. Sixty percent of operations is out-of-district tuition and transportation for special needs students. The other forty percent is supplies and materials for thirteen buildings. She gave a detailed account of expenditures for each school and all departments. Lengthy discussion followed. An hour long session of questions and answers followed where Ms. Ferrari clarified the sections of the report that were confusing to some members. When Ms. Ferrari completed the presentation, Ms. Murray asked if there were any questions from the audience. One person addressed the school committee.

Lengthy discussion took place regarding the SMILE Program, which will be located at the Capuano Early Childhood Center effective September 1, 2003. Some school committee members were concerned that the program being housed in one building may be a hardship for some families with more than one child, for transportation reasons. The committee talked about whether or not the program should be housed in other areas as well, i.e. east, west and central

III. FY04 Budget Discussion (cont'd.)

locations. Dr. Argenziano informed the committee that 188 letters were sent out today from the Parent Information Center; all student's were accepted, and no one is on a waiting list. He also told the committee that if the students were not all in one building, we would not be able to continue to offer full day Pre-Kindergarten. This would cut the program to half-day. Discussion continued, and Dr. Argenziano answered questions asked by committee members.

Another item talked about this evening was establishing a supplemental budget for FY04 to be submitted to the Board of Alderman, in addition to what the committee came up with as a bottom line figure. Dr. Argenziano provided a handout listing a supplemental budget for FY04 – operations and salaries, for members to refer to during discussion. Members reviewed and discussed, line by line, the programs and departments listed. A short time after members began discussing the items, it was decided this would be a "can't live without" list, i.e. core sheet, instead of a supplemental budget. When completed, the decisions made by the committee increased the bottom line from \$46,400,000. to \$47,570,000.

MOTION: Motion made by Ms. Taylor, seconded by Ms. Rossetti, to submit the school department budget in the amount of \$47,570,000.00.

The motion was approved by a roll call vote of Yes–7–Cardoso, Harris, Bauer, Sullivan, Taylor, Murray, and Rossetti; Absent–2–Gay and O'Donovan.

Ms. Cardoso voted on the budget with the notation to remove the line item of the 2nd grade teacher at the Kennedy School.

Ms. Harris voted on the budget with the notation to remove the line item of the girls basketball team.

Ms. Murray informed the community that the Finance and Facilities Committee of the Whole meeting scheduled for Wednesday, June 4, 2003 is postponed until Wednesday, June 11, 2003. This meeting will follow the Public Budget Hearing. Ms. Murray suggested to members that they discuss coming up with the supplemental budget that evening.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:40 p.m., by voice vote.

Dr. Albert F. Argenziano
Secretary